



# FIRST PRESS

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FRIDAY, FEB. 21, 2014

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Feb. 23, 10 a.m.**

The Lord's Supper will be observed.

**Feb. 23, 4:00 p.m.**

Sunday Night Study at the Manse.

**Mar. 2, 11:00 a.m.**

Congregational Meeting

**Mar. 3, 5:30 p.m.**

WIC Meeting

**Mar 23, 10 a.m.**

Installation and Ordination of the Diaconate. Lunch to follow.

## From the Pastor's Pen...

Some of you have asked for Ann's Mac & Cheese recipe, so here it is:

### Ingredients

- 1 pound Elbow Macaroni
- 6 Tablespoons Butter
- 1 clove Garlic, Pressed
- 1 teaspoon Dry Mustard
- ¼ teaspoons Cayenne Pepper
- 6 Tablespoons Flour
- 1-¾ cup Chicken Broth
- 3-½ cups Whole Milk
- 16 ounces Colby-Jack Cheese, Shredded
- 8 ounces Sharp Cheddar Cheese, Shredded
- Ground Black Pepper and 1 tsp Salt

- \*Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
- \*Bring 4 quarts of water to a boil over high heat. Stir in 1 tablespoon salt and the macaroni; cook, stirring occasionally, until al dente.

- \*Drain the pasta and leave it in the colander.
- \*Wipe the pot dry. Add the butter and return to medium heat until melted.
- \*Add the garlic, mustard, and cayenne; cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds.
- \*Add the flour and cook, stirring constantly, until golden, about 1 minute.
- \*Slowly whisk in the chicken broth and milk; bring to a simmer and cook, whisking often, until large bubbles form on the surface and the mixture is slightly thickened, 5 to 8 minutes.
- \*Off the heat, whisk in the cheeses gradually until completely melted. Season with salt and pepper.
- \*Add the drained pasta to the cheese sauce and stir, breaking up any clumps, until well combined. Pour into a 9 x 13" baking dish.
- \*Bake until golden brown and bubbling around the edges, approximately 20 minutes.

## Westminster Shorter Catechism Meditation

For the last few weeks we've been considering the offices of Christ as our redeemer. The WSC describes Christ's three offices (Prophet, Priest, and King) that He holds both in His humiliation and exaltation. This week we will look at the aspects of Christ's exaltation:

*Q. 28. Wherein consisteth Christ's exaltation?*

**A. Christ's exaltation consisteth in his rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day.**

There is an immediate contrast in tense in this question from the previous question regarding Christ's humiliation. Christ's humiliation *consisted* but Christ's exaltation *consists*: He is exalted even now.

The catechism discusses four stages of Christ's exaltation. Christ's humiliation began

with His conception and birth and His exaltation commences with His resurrection. In the resurrection Christ destroyed death and its power over His people.

Christ's exaltation also includes His ascension into Heaven. Christ left heaven as God's beloved Son and He returned to Heaven as the One powerfully declared and manifested to be God's Son and Christ, the chosen Saviour of mankind.

The third element is Christ's "session," His sitting beside the Father. There He shares in God's reign and intercedes for His people.

The final part of His exaltation is yet to be seen: His return and judgment. Christ will judge the words and deeds of all mankind. On that day, the wicked will finally get what is coming to them for their oppression and rebellion against God. For the righteous in Christ, we shall know even better God's mercy as we are acquitted in Christ.



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# Better Understanding the Law of God

On Wednesday Night bible Study we were looking together at the covenant God made with Israel at Mount Sinai. A part of that covenant was the Mosaic Law, which is recorded for us in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

The Law contains literally hundreds of commands centered around the Ten Commandments. It is vital to faith and godliness to know how we as Christians relate to this Law given 3500 years ago.

Scholars have divided the Law for us into three categories: Civil, Ceremonial, and Moral laws. It is important that we recognize the distinction between the first two categories and the last category.

The moral law teaches us how to live as God's people. The first two categories were instructive for the Hebrew Commonwealth in the Land of Promise as a tutor and guardian while they awaited the coming of the Messiah. The first two categories are valuable and profitable and to be observed by Christians in the "general equity" of their teachings.

The ultimate purpose of God's Laws is to show the people of God their sin, their need of a Saviour, and to teach them how to live as God's chosen people distinct from the world. Let's look at each of the categories :

**Civil Laws** – related to the conduct of the Kingdom of Israel as a society and political entity. These laws governed their interactions among themselves and the Nations around them. This category has expired because there is no longer a Hebrew Commonwealth in

covenant with God. Israel only prefigured the Church. The Civil Laws are instructive for us still in that they reveal God's character for how we as His people are to care for our neighbors.

**Ceremonial Laws** – related to the worship of the Old Testament people, instructing them on sacrifice, construction of sacred space, priesthood, observance of festivals and feast days, etc. The Ceremonial Law all pointed forward to Christ; it was fulfilled and expired in His Work.

**Moral Laws** – these laws continue unended as God's standard for righteousness and Christian conduct. Christ, of course, fulfilled the moral law on our behalf but we need the moral law to teach us how to live as His redeemed people.

These categories are very tidy, however some commands fit into multiple categories. Additionally, the categories are manmade and fallible, so we ought not spend too much time deciding what category to place a command, but rather ask ourselves what a specific command teaches us about God, how it directs us to Christ, how can we better love our neighbors and serve the Church by understanding this command.

The reason we no longer follow some of the Mosaic Laws is not that the "Old Testament doesn't matter." Quite to the contrary, some of the Laws served their purpose in leading the people to Christ and are different in application after His coming, death on the cross and Great Commission to disciple the Nations.

## Sermon Snapshot: "Church Discipline"

As we considered I Corinthians 5:1-2 last week we entered into one of the most difficult areas of Church life: church discipline. The leadership at Corinth has for some time been tolerating a number of sinful behaviors, and now Paul turns to a much more serious moral issue that, if unchecked, threatened to destroy the church.

Among the Christians at Corinth was a man who had taken his father's wife into his own bed. Such incest would hardly be tolerated today or even by the largely immoral Greek pagans in the first century. Yet the church allowed him to continue in this despicable sin without any consequences.

As Paul explained, the man must be put out of the church for such flagrant disregard of God's Law and standards of Christian morality. The formal term for this is "excommunication."

Excommunication is the final step of church discipline when dealing with church members who refuse to repent of sin. Church discipline is a vital part of church life. When a congregation fails to practice church discipline, she invites God's wrath upon her.

The purpose of church discipline is threefold: first for the glory of God, second for the purity of the church, and third for the "keeping and reclaiming of disobedient sinners" (BCO 27-3). Thus, church discipline is not done by meddling elders, but Christ's shepherds who care for the flock of God.

Christ has not given the church any power to compel obedience. Rather, church discipline occurs in three forms: admonition, suspension, and excommunication.

An *admonition* is simply instructing a church member as to the Law of Christ and warning him or her of the danger of disobedience. When someone continues in the sin after being admonished as to God's Word, the session may *suspend* him or her from the sacraments for a season. If the person continues to sin in such a public and incorrigible way, the Session is to *excommunicate* him or her from the church and treat the person as an unbeliever and one who needs to come to repentance and faith in Christ. This last step is what Paul is commanding the church to do at Corinth with the hope that such a step will, by God's grace, bring repentance.